

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

CPTED— is based on the premise that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life.

CPTED Key Concepts

Natural Surveillance
Natural Access Control
Territorial Reinforcement
Maintenance

Natural Surveillance – The placement of physical features, activities and people in a way that maximizes visibility. Public spaces and walkways must be well lit at night.

Natural Access Control – The physical guidance of people coming and going from a space by the strategic placement of entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping, and lighting.

Territorial Reinforcement – The use of physical attributes that express ownership, such as fences, pavement treatments, art, signage, and lighting.

Maintenance – Allows for the continued use of a space for its intended purpose. Serves as an additional expression of ownership. Prevents reduction of visibility from landscaping overgrowth and obstructed or inoperative lighting.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessments of properties and neighborhoods are not intended to make the sites crime-proof. However, the probability of crime should be reduced if CPTED strategies and directives are properly applied and maintained. CPTED recommendations are seldom in conflict with traditional forms of crime prevention, such as security systems, area watch groups and target-hardening techniques.



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CPTED

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Natural Surveillance

Natural Access Control

Territorial Reinforcement

Houston Police Department Public Affairs Division

Maintenance

CPTED for Neighborhoods

The CPTED Section surveys entire communities and individual homes. CPTED techniques are used in addition to traditional crime prevention methods, such as locks and alarm systems. Together, these crime prevention measures can help to improve the quality of life by reducing the fear of crime. The following are a few of the more common recommendations and ideas for neighborhoods:

- Be aware of who should and should not be in the vicinity. Design lighting, landscaping, windows and fences to promote visibility.
- Provide a sense of ownership of a space by clearly marking transitions from public to private space. Do this with signs, fences, borders, art, etc.
- Increase perception of pride and reduce fear by maintaining an area to the highest standard.
- Remove or disguise intimidating security measures such as barbed wire and burglar bars.

Single-family homes are what make up a neighborhood. CPTED concepts can be applied throughout the property. Owners should keep their property well maintained, addresses should be clearly visible from the street and homes well secured by using proper target hardening applications.

Neighbors should make an effort to get to know those living around them. Low shrubbery and fencing can aid in this effort. Additionally, fencing should not create entrapment zones for would-be criminals.



Since the dynamics of each neighborhood are unique, CPTED recommendations for one may not be suitable for another. Therefore, when applying CPTED concepts, look not only at the site in question, but also the surrounding areas.



CPTED for Multi-Family Housing

Multi-family complexes, such as apartments, condominiums, and townhouses present different opportunities for CPTED applications. Again, the surrounding area plays an integral part in the overall security picture. The following are some common examples of recommendations for multi-family sites:

- Create or modify designs so that visibility is maximized. Modifications may include lighting, landscaping and the placement of windows and common areas.
- Limit the number of access points and when appropriate, install gates and/or guards to further restrict passage.
- Provide occupants with the opportunity to personalize their units and thereby display a sense of ownership.
- Maintain all properties to the highest practical standards, particularly common areas. Quickly address any signs of blight or decay. Avoid using barbed wire.
- Provide easily monitored (and highly visible) play areas for children.

CPTED in Commercial Settings

The four key CPTED concepts of surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance can also be applied in commercial and institutional settings. These include offices, stores, warehouses, schools and churches. Again, CPTED strategies complement traditional crime prevention techniques. CPTED solutions may reduce crime while allowing legitimate users, such as employees, clients and customers, to feel more comfortable. The following are common recommendations for commercial and institutional sites:

- Design and maintain the site to maximize visibility day and night.
- Clearly define entrances and exits.
- Delineate between public space such as streets and privately controlled space such as a parking lot.
- Keep the property well maintained at all times. Immediately remove or paint over graffiti. Do not allow trash or debris to accumulate.

CPTED for Public Places

Public places are other areas where CPTED principles can benefit. Public places include shopping malls, parks and other areas where people gather. These areas can become an unsafe haven for criminal activity. It is important that the CPTED principles be introduced when designing or remodeling public places. Implementing CPTED strategies may reduce crime where the community gathers.

